

***"Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." – Ecclesiastes 4:12***

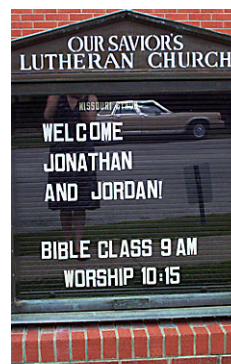


Dear Friends in Christ,

"Guess where we are." We often used this phrase when we talked to friends and family members on the phone from Poland, especially after we first arrived. Well, guess where we are **now** – we're back at home in the States! After our first year of service, we have a few weeks with Jon's family to relax, refresh, and rejuvenate for the coming year. Our school year ended on a strong note, and we've already had some great experiences since we've been home that we'll be sharing with you in this newsletter.

Mountaintop Experience

The day before we were to return to the States, we had the opportunity to participate in an amazing and unique church tradition. On June 15, the Lutheran churches in the area go up into the mountains to worship. This started during the Counter-Reformation when Lutherans in our area of Poland were not permitted to worship publicly. Not dissuaded by this sanction, they found a place in the mountains to worship. They baked their Bibles into loaves of bread so that they would not be discovered, and then they made the long and arduous trek up Rownica Mountain to a place of worship in the woods. Now, in remembrance of this time, people make this journey each year on Corpus Christi (a national holiday). It was astounding to see so many people scaling this mountain – including toddlers and elderly folks – some even in dress shoes! It was truly a testament to the faith of those who went before us and a reminder of how blessed we are in terms of religious freedom in these times. It was also an encouragement to be willing to do things that are inconvenient, uncomfortable, and difficult to serve God. If people back then were willing to risk persecution for their faith, how much more should we all be able to accomplish with the opportunities and freedoms that we all now enjoy. It is a constant concern for us not to become complacent or take for granted the blessings that we all enjoy. We need to continue to exercise our faith in the sight of all of those around us.



Wedding and Family

We have a new sister (in-law)! We're very happy to announce that Rachel McPherson (now Rachel Benning) is the newest member of the Benning clan. Rachel and David (Jon's youngest brother) were married this past on June 24, in Carlinville, Illinois, where they attended Blackburn College. The wedding was a good time, and we were able to see lots of our family and friends, many we haven't seen since we, ourselves, got married five short years ago. Rachel and David are now living in St. Louis, where Rachel will be bringing home the bacon and David will be attending Concordia Seminary.

Since being home, we have also been blessed to meet Paul (Jon's other brother) and Jessica's daughter, Caroline, and continuing to get to know their two foster sons, Bralynn and Quartey. Other new babies in the area include A.J. – our good friends' new son and Leah – the foster daughter of Jon's Uncle Warren and Aunt Debbie. We're excited to see these families growing in size and in love, and we pray that God will continue to bless them.

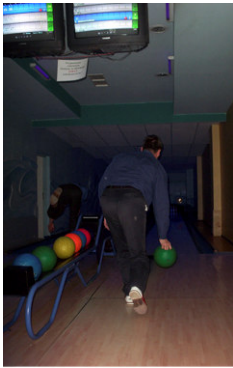


Rainbow Harvest Camp

When we return to Poland, we will be helping at the Rainbow Harvest children's camp. This English language camp is directed by Jasia Gazda. Jasia is also the author of the book *Adopted by God*, "a book that vividly illustrates her personal testimony and life's work of evangelism. Her stories of personal struggles with ultimate surrender to Jesus are a witness to the faithfulness of God. Her subsequent struggles with Communist officials are confirmation of how God can use



Through the Ablaze! initiative, LCMS seeks to share the Good News of Jesus with 100 million unreached or uncommitted people by 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. No matter where we are, each of us has opportunities to share God's love with those around us. What opportunities do you see in your church, workplace, or neighborhood? LCMS also lists opportunities at www.lcmsworldmission.org. Check it out!



one determined individual." We are trying to get some copies of the book to lend to those interested in learning more about evangelism in Eastern Europe. We are excited to be of service, and look forward to returning to Poland to make new friends and be an encouragement to them in their faith.

Polish Language Class

We will be returning to Cieszyn a month early to participate in an intensive Polish language course. We are eager to improve our language skills, and we are hoping this will help our communication problems at the school and deepen our relationships with our students and friends. The class is taught at the Silesian University. We have known others who have participated and it has been very beneficial to them. We thank you for your support which has enabled us to take this class. Without your help it would not be possible.

Financial Needs

We thank all of you for your continued prayers and financial support. We are still in need of some funding for next year. If the Spirit leads you to support our work in Poland, we would be very grateful and honored to have your support. Donations can be sent to LCMS Mission Senders * 1333 S. Kirkwood Rd. * St. Louis, MO 63122 * with "Poland Benning Support" in the memo line or you can use the enclosed brochure.

Getting Involved

One of the wonderful things about being home for the summer is the opportunity to meet with new and continuing supporters. Not including the wedding, we had our first such opportunity recently at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Hillsboro, IL. Grandma Benning and Pastor Moyer organized a potluck following the service where we were able to eat (yay for our long-missed Doritos and brownies!), visit with church members, and present a little bit about what we have been doing during the past year. We are blessed to have their continued support.

Our remaining visit schedule is as follows if you would be interested in joining us:

July 16th – St. Johns Lutheran Church – St. Louis, MO

July 23rd – Trinity Lutheran Church – Springfield, IL

Again, we would like to thank you for the prayers, books, materials, and financial gifts that you have sent to support us. As always you can get in contact with us through email. Our email address is polishpioneers@yahoo.com.

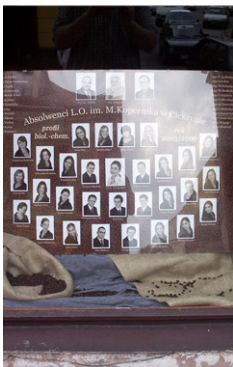
Prayers and Praises

- * For our safe, long trip home to the States and a great reunions with our family and friends
- * For David and Rachel's wonderful wedding
- * For the many blessings God has given Jordan during her first 30 years (her big day is July 14)
- * For a successful transition that our friends Heather and Monika are making in their new work and living situations
- * For Jodi Rolf, the new volunteer, as she prepares for her time in Poland
- * For the Hinrich family and the Bible School at CME
- * For the many books that have been collected and given to students and SPTE elementary school in Cieszyn
- * For safe and fun travels back to Poland at the end of July
- * For a refreshing and relaxing stay in the States and many good times with the family
- * For support raising – that we and our fellow volunteers will receive the funding that we need and that supporters will be blessed as they see their gifts working throughout the world

We thank you for your continued prayerful support. We hope to see many of you while we are home, so that we can tell you more about what we have been doing this past year.

Jonathan and Jordan Benning

Photos: (page 1) Our Savior's Hillsboro welcome board, Rownica worship service in the mountains, Rownica log benches, David and Rachel's wedding (page 2) bowling with the kids from CME, first grade story time, cookie making with kids from Creator School, last day of first grade class relay races, student yearbook board



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